

The Super Bowl in Arizona: then and now

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When 125,000 Super Bowl visitors spill into the Valley in just a few weeks, there will be no shortage of things for residents to boast about.

Since Arizona last played host to the big event in 1996, we've added dozens of miles of freeways, erected high-rises in downtown Phoenix and along Tempe Town Lake and built Scottsdale into an after-hours mecca with new megacclubs, restaurants and bars.

Oh, and let's not forget the \$455 million football palace in Glendale where Super Bowl XLII will be staged on Feb. 3, the centerpiece of the West Valley city's new sports-and-entertainment district.

But along with all the new attractions, the region's population has swelled, creating greater traffic congestion and more pollution.

Transportation

Freeway miles in Maricopa County:

- **1996:** 161.
- **2007:** 262.

One hundred miles. That is the amount of freeway the Valley has added since 1996 to keep pace with growth as development pushes out into the desert.

The bulk of that effort has been the completion of Loop 101, which shoots north from the Loop 202 interchange in Chandler, runs through Tempe and Scottsdale, cuts across north Phoenix and heads south through Peoria and Glendale until it reaches Interstate 10.

Loop 101's Agua Fria segment will be a critical corridor during Super Bowl week, linking University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale and neighboring venues with the rest of the Valley.

Other road projects by the Arizona Department of Transportation include Red Mountain and Santan extensions of Loop 202 and improvements to U.S. 60 along Grand Avenue.

"ADOT has been busy building to keep up with rapid growth in the Valley, to keep up with the movement of people and commerce," spokesman Timothy Tait said.

Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport

- **1996:** 30 million passengers.
- **2007:** 42 million passengers.

Greater traffic has forced Phoenix's Sky Harbor to boost its capacity since 1996. An additional runway, new control tower, one-stop-shop rental-car facility and more gates and [security](#) lanes are among the improvements.

The expansion has allowed the airport to better serve large numbers of passengers, especially during large events.

Over the past decade, the airport has added two extra concourses at Terminal 4, giving its largest and busiest terminal an additional 15 gates.

Helping travelers make their way through the airport are the purple-jacketed Navigators. The volunteer program, which began in 2000, is now 400 strong and will be out in force during Super Bowl week.

If the goal is to make passengers' airport experience smoother, nothing has made a greater impact than Sky Harbor's \$285 million car-rental center, near 16th Street and Buckeye Road. Rental companies previously were scattered around the airport. Today, all 13 companies are under one roof and are served by a common bus fleet, eliminating roadway congestion and customer confusion.

Downtown Phoenix

- **9 million:** Square feet of development since 1996.
- **6,350:** Residential units added since 1996.
- **1,200:** Hotel rooms added or under construction.

The downtown Phoenix skyline has changed dramatically in the past 12 years, adding job centers and a hotel, thousands of residential units, convention space and a major sports stadium. Signs of the Valley's light-rail system, set to open in December, are ubiquitous.

Yet Copper Square, downtown Phoenix's 90-block core, still appears to have one foot in its past and one in its future. New buildings such as the \$46 million Translational Genomics Research Institute, or TGen, overlook dilapidated homes and vacant lots.

Since 1996, downtown has seen about \$3 billion in development, including Chase Field (1998 opening), home of the Arizona Diamondbacks; Arizona State [University's](#) new downtown campus (2006); and the University of Arizona College of Medicine (2006), a joint project with ASU in historic Phoenix Union High School buildings.

The Collier Center and Phelps Dodge Centre together brought 1 million square feet of

office space to downtown in late 1999.

Downtown's crown jewel is the city-run Convention Center, now amid a \$600 million expansion. When completed in early 2009, the center at 100 N. Third St. will total nearly 900,000 square feet.

The NFL already has taken notice, booking its Super Bowl Media Center at the new West Building (2006 opening) and its Taste of the NFL charity event at the existing South Building.

Said Steve Moore, president and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau: "2009 is the year of Phoenix's emergence as a more viable convention destination, with the arrival of light rail, convention expansion and the new (1,000-room) Sheraton Hotel."

Metro Phoenix population

- **1996:** 2.9 million.

- **2006:** 4.1 million.

There is a reason why rooftops have multiplied, roads are more congested and the sky is a little bit hazier. The Valley of the Sun has added more than 1 million residents over the past 12 years.

In fact, Phoenix overtook Philadelphia last year to become the fifth-largest city in the country. And Arizona has consistently been among the fastest-growing states in recent years.

From 1996 to 2005, the amount of time Phoenix commuters spent stuck in traffic increased more than 100 percent to 81.7 million hours a year, according to the Texas Transportation Institute.

During the same period, the amount of particulate matter in Arizona skies has increased by 40 percent to nearly 85,000 tons, according to the state Department of Environmental Quality.

As development expands, residents are feeling more removed from the desert's natural landscape, said Professor Patricia Gober, co-director of Arizona State University's Decision Center for a Desert City.

"Not only have we added all of these people over the past 10 years," she said, "but the land area consumed puts us further from the open space, desert views and expanses which attracted many people to the region in the first place."

Downtown Scottsdale

Annual visitors to Scottsdale

- **1996:** 6.4 million.
- **2006:** 7.7 million.

Downtown Scottsdale has seen a resurgence in recent years, with new developments such as the Scottsdale Waterfront and SouthBridge bringing the Mix shops, Olive & Ivy and other high-profile businesses to both sides of the Arizona Canal.

The popular resort city has retained its charm as the "West's Most Western Town," with dozens of gift shops and art galleries dotting Old Town Scottsdale. But an edgier side has emerged, with chic nightclubs, lounges and restaurants such as Myst and Six that are sure to be major magnets for Super Bowl fans.

Over the past seven years, \$3.4 billion of private investment has flowed into downtown, said Rick Kidder, president and CEO of the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce.

"Scottsdale has always done well during the Super Bowl, and it will continue to do well," Kidder said. "But with downtown making the strides that it has, the presence of downtown will make an even larger impact this time around than it did last time."

Stadiums

- **1996 Super Bowl:** Sun Devil Stadium (opened 1958).
- **2008 Super Bowl:** University of Phoenix Stadium (opened 2006).

After Sun Devil Stadium played host to the 1996 Super Bowl, NFL owners told Arizona officials that the big game wouldn't return until they built a new stadium. The game and hospitality were tremendous, but there were concerns about inadequate restrooms, uncomfortable bleachers and a lack of big-money suites at the Tempe landmark.

It wasn't until a new venue broke ground in Glendale in 2003 that owners awarded Arizona this year's big game.

"University of Phoenix Stadium is a state-of-the-art building built not just for Cardinals games but for Super Bowls," said Cardinals President Michael Bidwill, whose team shares the venue with the Fiesta Bowl. "It's really the catalyst for Arizona winning the bid."

Glendale's \$455 million stadium is the first in North America to feature a retractable roof and a rollout natural-grass field. The features allow the 63,400-seat facility, expandable to 73,000 for mega-events, to host a range of events, from soccer tournaments to trade shows to rock

Tempe Town Lake

Land value of 743-acre district surrounding the lake:

- **1996:** Less than \$15.4 million.
- **2007:** \$93.6 million.

During Super Bowl XXX at Tempe's Sun Devil Stadium, hundreds of fans parked their cars in the dry Salt River bed. That was in 1996, three years before the first drop of water even flowed into the 220-acre Tempe Town Lake.

Today, the man-made lake is booming with activity, from festivals to triathlons to dragon-boat races. And it's sparked multimillion-dollar developments along the lakefront, including the modern mixed-use project known as Hayden Ferry Lakeside and Tempe Center for the Arts.

A number of other high-rise condos, office buildings and hotels will dominate the north and south banks of the lake in years to come.